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STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING



THOMAS D. WATKINS, JR.
SUPERINTENDENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

March 29, 2004

MEMORANDUM

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Thomas D. Watkins, Chairman

SUBJECT: Presentation and Update on Universal Education

On June 26, 2003, the State Board of Education charged the Superintendent to: "Prepare a draft position paper on universal education that will include principles, statutory alignment, and vision for the education of all infants, toddlers, children and youth, including diverse learners such as those with disabilities, and others who require special supports to achieve desired educational outcomes."

A diverse group of stakeholders have been invited to work with a core team from across the Department to develop this draft position paper. The members of the referent group represent those involved in programs for children and youth from education, social services, the courts, local government, and other organizations and agencies. The group has met for two full day facilitated sessions in January and March, and will meet again in May and June.

Session one focused on clarifying the State Board of Education charge, to identify patterns and trends in education over the last half century, and to generate future challenges to realizing universal education. The second session focused on generating a system of principles that would serve as a foundation for effective implementation of universal education.

A brief overview of the work of the group will be presented in April regarding the patterns of principles that are emerging. Following the May referent group meeting, the representatives will be able to share the prioritized set of selected principles. When finished, the referent group will be prepared to present a draft position paper to the Board, which will expand on the prioritized principles and share a vision statement for universal education.

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